

STEVAN PEARCE

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3102

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NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS

February 27, 2008

The Honorable R. David Paulison
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Paulison,

I want to bring to your attention my concerns about the snow melt expected to cause problems along the Animas River, specifically, around the town of Aztec, New Mexico.

Right now, the snow pack above Aztec is at 160 percent of normal. We know flooding in this region can be a problem; in spring of 2005, the snow pack was about 130 percent of normal. During that spring melt, raised river levels caused flooding and threatened our communities.

This year, the higher snowfall totals could be even more dangerous, especially if we get a quick melt. The Mayor of Aztec is particularly concerned with mobile homes that are built in the river bottom and the threat of flooding to these residences. Furthermore, high water could force the closure of the bridges, cutting the town in two.

This situation leaves the people of Aztec and the surrounding countryside at significant risk. We face the possibility of an emergency here later this year. In light of this, I urge you to direct staff at FEMA to familiarize themselves with the past instances of flooding so we may be prepared for significant flooding this year.

I want to thank you for your attention to this matter. I know that you share my hope that this situation will resolve itself without your agency having to become involved. However, I want to make sure that you are aware of the ominous possibility facing the people of Aztec and the Animas River.

Sincerely,

Stevan Pearce
Member of Congress

SEP/ttc

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LTG Robert L. Van Antwerp
Commander
US Army Corps of Engineers
441 G. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20314-1000

Dear Commander Van Antwerp,

I want to bring to your attention my concerns about the snow melt expected to cause problems along the Animas River, specifically, around the town of Aztec, New Mexico.

Right now, the snow pack above Aztec is at 160 percent of normal. We know flooding in this region can be a problem; in spring of 2005, the snow pack was about 130 percent of normal. During that spring melt, raised river levels caused flooding and threatened our communities.

This year, the higher snowfall totals could be even more dangerous, especially if we get a quick melt. The Mayor of Aztec is particularly concerned with mobile homes that are built in the river bottom and the threat of flooding to these residences. Furthermore, high water could force the closure of the bridges, cutting the town in two.

This situation leaves the people of Aztec and the surrounding countryside at significant risk. I want to draw your attention to this matter. While the Animus River is a free flowing river, in case of an emergency the Army Corps may be called upon to assist us in preventing a disaster. I would like you to direct staff to familiarize themselves with the past instances of flooding and consider the possibility that we may face an emergency here later this year.

I want to thank you for your attention to this matter. I know that you share my hope that this situation will resolve itself without your agency having to become involved. However, I want to make sure that you are aware of the ominous possibility facing the people of Aztec and the Animas River.

Sincerely,

Stevan Pearce
Member of Congress

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